

"Do's" and "Don'ts" for Job Interviewers

Page 3

Ways to Improve Your Personal Effectiveness

Page 3

Tackling Timewasters — Part II
— Meetings and Paperwork

Page 2

Issues

for
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MANAGEMENT

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Appeal Board Upholds Right of Employer in Dismissal of Probationary Employee

The State Personnel Appeal Board, in a recent case decision, has clearly reaffirmed the right and responsibility of the employer to monitor, evaluate and consider all aspects of probationary employees, including the right of dismissal during the probationary period.

The Appeal Board conducted a hearing on the appeal of a state employee dismissed during his probationary period pursuant to R.I. General Laws 36-4-28, for the good of the service, as a result of criminal charges being lodged against him by a municipal police department during his probationary period.

The department, through counsel, offered testimony and documentation to corroborate testimony that the appellant had been charged with criminal complaints by a municipal police department. The appellant pleaded nolo. Subsequently, one charge was dismissed and the Court filed the remaining charges on payment of costs. As a matter of explanation to the Board, it was noted that the charges would be filed for one year and at the end of said period, if no further offense was committed by the appellant, his record could be expunged and therefore he would carry no record of the offense.

The appellant, through counsel, argued that he was not clearly

made aware of his Miranda Rights, and that he was intoxicated at the time that he admitted his crimes. He further argued that at the date of the hearing, the one year period of the filing of charges in the Court had expired, and therefore he bore no record of those crimes.

The department argued that probationary employees serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority according to statute. It further pointed out that at the time of the dismissal, the appellant had in fact, pleaded nolo to the charges, and they were at that time part of his record in the district court.

In rendering its decision, the Personnel Appeal Board made no reference to the appellant's criminal charges nor to district court action. The Board, by unanimous vote, in accordance with Chapter 36-4-42 of the General Laws, sustained the action taken by the appointing authority citing in part Chapter 36-4-28 of the General Laws, "Any employee may be dismissed by the appointing authority during the probationary period for reasons relating to the employee's qualifications or for the good of the service, etc." Thus, the employee's appeal was denied and dismissed.

Discretionary Effort in the Workplace — Part I

A Three Part Series on the Changing Status of the American Work Ethic.

Part One discusses changes in the nature of work and the composition of the work force.

The concept of **discretionary income** is often used by economists in describing the income that remains after people have paid their fixed and necessary expenses and their taxes. It is that portion of income over which individuals exercise the greatest control.

This article uses a parallel concept called **discretionary effort**. It is defined as the **difference** between the **maximum** amount of effort an individual could bring to the job, and the **minimum** amount of effort required to avoid being fired or penalized; in short, the portion of one's effort over which a jobholder has the greatest control.

In this series, the concept of discretionary effort is used as a key to understanding some of the fundamental changes that are transforming the American workplace. A correct understanding of this concept can shed important light on the problems of the economy and on their solutions.

The amount of discretionary effort in the workplace has greatly increased.

Most of us have a distorted and obsolete picture of the workplace. We customarily think of a working American as a person with a

routine industrial or assembly-line type job. The very word "worker" conjures up an image of a blue-collar worker (typically male) in a low-discretion job, supporting children and a non-working wife.

Today, this image holds true for only a small — and diminishing — fraction of the workforce. Changes in the nature of work and the composition of the workforce have substantially altered the workplace, and one result has been an increase in the amount of jobholder discretion. The changes can be grouped in three areas:

New Jobs — There has been a major shift in the type of jobs that Americans hold, away from blue-collar and manufacturing jobs, towards white-collar and service jobs. Public school teachers, to choose one example, now outnumber all of the production workers in the chemical, oil, rubber, plastic, paper and steel industries combined. The Public Agenda Foundation research shows that white-collar and service-sector jobs typically have higher levels of discretion than blue-collar or goods-producing jobs. Close to half (49%) of all white-collar jobholders, for example, say that they have a great deal of freedom about how to perform their jobs; only a third of blue-collar workers (33%) describe their jobs this way. As high-discretion,

(Turn to Page 2)

Discretionary Effort (Continued)

white-collar and service-sector jobs have replaced low-discretion, blue-collar/manufacturing jobs, the total amount of discretion in the workplace has increased.

New Technologies — Most observers agree that we are now in the midst of a second industrial revolution that is in many ways more far-reaching than the first. One of the most important differences is the way that the new technology increases the amount of discretion in the workplace. The steam engine and the assembly line made it possible for complex products to be built by an uneducated and unskilled immigrant labor force. By simplifying and dividing tasks the technology of the first industrial revolution made the individual worker less important. The new technology has the opposite effect. The jobs created in a high-technology, knowledge-intensive economy are geared to the skilled and the educated employees. The worker becomes more important and the new technology usually gives jobholders much more discretion over their own output.

Of the close to half (44%) of American jobholders who say that they have experienced significant technological changes on their jobs in the last five years, nearly three-quarters (74%) say that the changes have made their work more interesting, and more than half (55%) say that technological changes have given them greater independence. In contrast to critics of the new technology who argue that it reduces discretion, the results of the survey show that for the majority, technology has the effect of giving jobholders more discretion over their output. In the words of Andrew Knight, editor of *The Economist*, "the more one thinks technology, the more one has to think of people."

New Workers — There has also been a change in the composition and values of the workforce. Education levels, for example, have risen sharply. Between 1959 and 1977, the percentage of high school graduates in the work force rose from 32% to 42%, and the number of college graduates nearly doubled, jumping from 10% to 18%.

Younger jobholders, who grew up in a period of tremendous affluence are also bringing new values to the workplace. In the past, many workers were willing to sacrifice a great deal of their autonomy in exchange for a good income and an increasing standard of living for themselves and their families. But today, the terms of this unwritten contract are not acceptable to younger, better educated jobholders. A report published by the Work in America Institute estimates that "ten years ago, 70% of industrial workers were willing to accept managerial authority with minor reservations. Today, the reverse finding has emerged: younger, more educated workers resent authoritarianism." These jobholders have demanded, and to some extent have received greater autonomy in the workplace.

Taken together, these trends have had the effect of creating a higher discretion workplace. More than two-fifths of the work force (43%) say that they have "a great deal of freedom about how to do their jobs"; only about a fifth (21%) say that they have very little control over how they do their jobs. As the following chart shows, the high-discretion jobholders tend to be better educated, to hold white-collar and service jobs, and to have experienced technological changes. Low-discretion workers are more likely to work in blue-collar and manufacturing jobs and to be union members; to a striking degree their jobs also have higher levels of dirt, noise, and pollution than the jobs of high discretion jobholders.

High-discretion Jobs and Low-discretion Jobs*

	High-discretion jobholders %	Low-discretion jobholders %
White-collar	61	31
Some college education	53	39
Experienced technological changes on the job	49	39
Manufacturing sector	17	29
Blue-collar	39	61
Union member	14	31
Workplace with dirt, noise and pollution	28	57

* Chart based on the Public Agenda Foundation survey of a national cross-section of 845 working Americans.

In the next ISSUES... Management's role in controlling discretionary effort.

This series is based on a report "Putting the Work Ethic to Work — A Public Agenda Report on Restoring America's Competitive Vitality," by Daniel Yankelovich and John Immerwahr, The Public Agenda Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Tackling Timewasters Part II

Meetings and Paperwork

Ask managers everywhere to point out the two biggest time consumers in their job and the answer is universally the same — meetings and paperwork!

Eliminating the two from the workplace may be "a consummation devoutly to be wish'd," to paraphrase Shakespeare's Hamlet. But it's unlikely that these two timewasters will soon disappear. The best we can hope for is to keep them under control and prevent them from taking over our work-a-day lives.

Here are some tips on taming the two shrews!

Meetings — Who Needs Them?

Discourage and discontinue unnecessary meetings. Make decisions without meetings. Never use a committee if it can be done individually. Ask, "Is the meeting really necessary? What is its purpose?" Suggest a telephone conference as a meeting alternative. Meetings are too often used as a substitute for action. If you can't make a decision on your own without seeking to share responsibility for your actions with others, you don't belong in management.

Whenever you MUST hold a meeting, use an agenda and stick to it. Set a time limit. Start on time and quit on time. Be prepared for the meeting. Minimize "small talk." Resist tangents. Stay on course.

Invite only those whose attendance is necessary and let them know in advance what is expected of them. Participants should be allowed to come and go at will as their contribution is needed and completed.

If you want to be really innovative, try holding a meeting with everyone standing! More will get done in less time!

Paperwork — How to Stem the Avalanche

Get rid of desk top clutter. Keep your desk cleared for action. After sorting documents, try to handle each piece of paper only once. Don't set it aside without taking some action.

Generate as little paperwork as possible. If feasible, answer letters by making handwritten responses in the margin or bottom of the letter you received and mailing it back to the sender. You can cut in half the number of documents in your files and save paper in the bargain, by making carbon copies of replies to incoming correspondence on the back of the letter received! Don't record it. Don't ask for it. Throw it away. Discontinue it. Question its purpose and continued existence!

Let your secretary answer routine correspondence. On correspondence you must handle, dictate only the key thoughts. Let your secretary compose the letter.

Write for the reader. Think before you write or dictate. Plan what you want to say. Use clear, concise fact-oriented language and style. Eliminate unnecessary words, sentences, paragraphs. Most letters can be answered in two paragraphs.

If some of these suggestions sound like a drastic departure from the way you have been doing business, then these tips are right on target. Try one or two on for size — and watch what happens! You may be pleasantly surprised at the beneficial results!

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"Dos" and "Don'ts" for Job Interviewers

Interviewing job applicants is no longer the simple chore it once was. We live in an age of sensitivity to personal rights, and there are plenty of laws around to protect those rights.

Job interviewers should be extremely cautious to insure that the questions asked during an interview are relevant to the job for which the individual is applying. The law requires that you be able to demonstrate the relevance of every question to a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ).

Here are some "dos" and "don'ts" that may help to keep you out of trouble over some unintended equal opportunity infringement.

Age	DO — Ask if candidate is between 18 and 65.	DON'T — Ask candidate his/her age.
Arrest	—	DON'T — Ask candidate if he/she has a criminal record.
Education	DO — Ask about degrees and coursework.	DON'T — Eliminate candidate based on degrees unless relevance to the job can undeniably be shown.
Handicap	DO — Ask about any disability which would interfere with the job.	DON'T — Ask about past disabilities or illnesses.
Marital & Family Status	DO — Ask about candidate's ability to meet work schedules.	DON'T — Ask about child-care, pregnancy, or marital status.
Race	—	DON'T — Ask.
Religion	DO — Ask about candidate's ability to meet work schedules.	DON'T — Ask.
Sex	DO — Mention gender only if the job requires (BFOQ) the physical characteristics of one gender only.	DON'T — Mention gender unless it is a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ).

The Penalty of Leadership

In every field of human endeavor, he that is first must perpetually live in the white light of publicity. Whether the leadership be vested in a man or in a manufactured product, emulation and envy are ever at work. In art, in literature, in music, in industry, the reward and the punishment are always the same. The reward is widespread recognition; the punishment, fierce denial and detraction. When a man's work becomes a standard for the whole world, it also becomes a target for the shafts of the envious few. If his work be merely mediocre, he will be left severely alone — if he achieve a masterpiece, it will set a million tongues a-wagging. Jealously does not protrude its forked tongue at the artist who produces a commonplace painting. Whatsoever you write, or paint, or play, or sing, or build, no one will strive to surpass, or to slander you, unless your work be stamped with the seal of genius. Long, long after a great work or a good work has been done, those who are disappointed or envious continue to cry out that it can not be done. Spiteful little voices in the domain of art were raised against our own Whistler as a mountebank, long after the big world had acclaimed him its greatest artistic genius. Multitudes flocked to Bayreuth to worship at the musical shrine of Wagner, while the little group of those whom he had dethroned and displaced argued angrily that he was no musician at all. The little world continued to protest that Fulton could never build a steamboat, while the big world flocked to the river banks to see his boat steam by. The leader is assailed because he is a leader, and the effort to equal him is merely added proof of that leadership. Failing to equal or to excel, the follower seeks to depreciate and to destroy — but only confirms once more the superiority of that which he strives to supplant. There is nothing new in this. It is as old as the world and as old as the human passions — envy, fear, greed, ambition, and the desire to surpass. And it all avails nothing. If the leader truly leads, he remains — the leader. Master-poet, master-painter, master-workman, each in his turn is assailed, and each holds his laurels through the ages. That which is good or great makes itself known, no matter how loud the clamor of denial. That which deserves to live — lives.

This ad, written by Theodore F. MacManus, appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post*, January 2, 1915. Copyright, Cadillac Motor Car Company

Ways to Improve Your Personal Effectiveness

- ☐ SCHEDULE SUFFICIENT TIME FOR PLANNING ACTIVITIES AND SETTING GOALS.
- ☐ PINPOINT THE TIME OF DAY YOU ARE MOST PRODUCTIVE.
- ☐ ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS DURING THESE PRIME HOURS.
- ☐ SCHEDULE HIGH PRIORITY TASKS FOR YOUR PRIME HOURS.
- ☐ SCHEDULE DIFFICULT AND DISTASTEFUL TASKS FOR YOUR PRIME HOURS.
- ☐ SCHEDULE EASIER OR MORE INTERESTING TASKS FOR OFF-PEAK TIMES.
- ☐ GIVE LOW PRIORITY TASKS MINIMAL ATTENTION.
- ☐ ELIMINATE UNIMPORTANT ACTIVITIES.
- ☐ MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT PROCRASTINATING.
- ☐ MAKE REALISTIC ESTIMATES OF THE TIME NECESSARY TO COMPLETE TASKS.
- ☐ PREPARE A LIST OF TASKS TO DO EACH DAY.
- ☐ BREAK UP TASKS INTO MANAGEABLE SEGMENTS.
- ☐ SET DEADLINES FOR EACH SEGMENT.
- ☐ COMPLETE TASKS BEFORE STARTING NEW ONES.
- ☐ DELEGATE TASKS THAT CAN BE DONE BY OTHERS.
- ☐ DELEGATE OR ELIMINATE EXCESSIVE PAPERWORK.
- ☐ LIMIT CONVERSATIONS TO IMPORTANT MATTERS.
- ☐ PACE WORK TO ACHIEVE DESIRED RESULTS WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME.
- ☐ SCHEDULE BREAKS OR CHANGES IN YOUR ROUTINE TO ELIMINATE FATIGUE.
- ☐ ARRIVE AT IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS ON TIME BY RECORDING THE TIME YOU HAVE TO LEAVE THE OFFICE, NOT THE TIME OF THE APPOINTMENT.
- ☐ HAVE ONLY ONE PROJECT ON YOUR DESK AT A TIME — THE ONE YOU ARE WORKING ON NOW.
- ☐ ASK FOR MORE INFORMATION WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING OR NEED MORE FACTS.
- ☐ ESTABLISH RAPPORT WITH YOUR STAFF.
- ☐ TRAIN STAFF MEMBERS TO TAKE OVER NEW TASKS.
- ☐ ANTICIPATE CHANGES AND PREPARE FOR THEM.
- ☐ CONFINE CONTROVERSY OR CONFLICTS TO ISSUES INSTEAD OF PERSONALITY TRAITS.

"Only with trust can there be any real communication, and until that trust is achieved, the techniques and gadgetry of communication are so much wasted effort. Study after study has pointed to the same moral: Before employees will accept management 'facts,' they must first have overall confidence in the motives and sincerity of management."

— William H. Whyte

(Contributed by Deborah A. Dallaire, R.I. Motor Vehicle Dealers' License Commission.)

Great Time Wasters

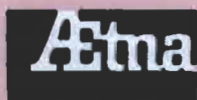
- ☐ ACCEPTING TOO MANY JOBS AT ONE TIME
- ☐ ATTEMPTING TO BLAME PEOPLE FOR MISTAKES
- ☐ CHANGING PRIORITIES UNNECESSARILY
- ☐ COMMUTING
- ☐ DELAYED DECISIONS
- ☐ EXCESSIVE CLUTTER
- ☐ EXCESSIVE NEATNESS
- ☐ FAILURE TO DELEGATE
- ☐ FAILURE TO LET SUBORDINATES WORK ON THEIR OWN
- ☐ FAILURE TO SET PRIORITIES
- ☐ FAILURE TO SET STANDARDS
- ☐ FATIGUE
- ☐ INABILITY TO SAY NO
- ☐ INADEQUATE PLANNING
- ☐ INADEQUATE STAFFING
- ☐ INTERRUPTIONS
- ☐ LACK OF AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT RESPONSIBILITIES
- ☐ LACK OF CLEAR OBJECTIVES
- ☐ LACK OF CONCENTRATION
- ☐ LACK OF INFORMATION
- ☐ LACK OF ROUTINE METHODS FOR HANDLING RECURRING PROBLEMS
- ☐ LOW MORALE
- ☐ MANAGING BY CRISIS
- ☐ MEETINGS
- ☐ MISPLACED FILES AND MATERIALS
- ☐ NO DAILY PLAN
- ☐ OUTDATED METHODS
- ☐ OVERLAPPING JOBS
- ☐ PERSONAL CONFLICTS AMONG STAFF MEMBERS
- ☐ PERSONAL INSECURITY
- ☐ POOR COMMUNICATIONS
- ☐ POOR FILING SYSTEM
- ☐ POOR LISTENING HABITS
- ☐ PROCRASTINATION
- ☐ TOO MANY PERSONAL ACTIVITIES
- ☐ TOO MANY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN DECISIONS
- ☐ TYPED CORRECTIONS OR UNIMPORTANT LETTERS OR MEMOS. (HANDWRITTEN CORRECTIONS ACHIEVE THE SAME OBJECTIVE.)
- ☐ UNIMPORTANT TELEPHONE CALLS
- ☐ UNNECESSARILY LONG PHONE CALLS
- ☐ UNNECESSARY TASKS
- ☐ WRITING LETTERS, MEMOS, REPORTS THAT COULD BE WRITTEN BY A SECRETARY OR ASSISTANT

(Submitted by Grace Lemon, Job Service, R.I. Department of Employment Security.)

Deferred Compensation — an employee benefit with far-reaching advantages . . .

State employees can save for the future by participating in the deferred compensation program, a way of putting money aside without having to pay taxes on it, or the income it earns, until retirement when your tax rate is usually lower. Managers can assist their employees in learning more about deferred compensation by showing them an audio-visual presentation that clearly explains the deferred compensation program. To arrange to show this slide-tape production, call Don Boisvert at 277-2160.

This newsletter is sponsored by the state's three carriers of the deferred compensation plan.



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